

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 334

By Burks

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate the members of the Putnam County 4-H State Champion Forestry Judging Team.

WHEREAS, the people of Tennessee are fortunate indeed to enjoy such a rich natural environment, which boasts a remarkable diversity of flora and fauna as well as some of the most beautiful scenery in North America; and

WHEREAS, the natural majesty of this State is one of its most precious resources; in earlier days, Tennessee's environs served as a powerful attractor, bringing settlers over the Appalachian Mountains to take up residence in some of the wildest areas in the young colonies; and

WHEREAS, the State's striking beauty continues to attract new residents, along with countless tourists and commercial interests; it is imperative that the integrity of this beauty be maintained, for reasons both practical and aesthetic; and

WHEREAS, knowledge of the State's indigenous animal and plant life is key to protecting this integrity, and Tennessee 4-H, the youth development program of University of Tennessee Extension, seeks to provide educational experiences in areas such as forestry and wildlife that will help young Tennesseans become responsible, capable, and energetic environmental stewards; and

WHEREAS, recently, two separate teams comprised of young Putnam County residents took fourth and first places in the 4-H State Championship Forestry Judging contest, held at the agriculture campus of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville; and

WHEREAS, driven not only by intellectual curiosity but also by an abiding respect for Tennessee's native life, the members of these two teams have spent countless hours learning to identify trees by their leaves and the insects and diseases that can affect trees; and

WHEREAS, forestry judging contestants must also learn to use a compass and Biltmore stick to measure the diameter and number of logs in a tree; and

WHEREAS, the two Putnam County teams first traveled to Cedars of Lebanon State Park to compete in the regional contest; the senior team of Catherine Carney, Katie Morgan, Morgin Arms, and Christen Carney placed third, while the other senior team, which includes Mara McDonald, Mitch Baker, Ashley McGray, and Evan Betterton, placed fourth; and

WHEREAS, Catherine Carney earned fourth place individual overall, and Christen Carney earned tenth place individual overall; and

WHEREAS, their respective performances meant that both Putnam County teams would meet again at Knoxville to join eight other teams from across Tennessee for the state contest; this was the first time ever that two Putnam County teams would vie for the 4-H State Forestry Judging Championship in the same year; and

WHEREAS, the all-day event included several components: tree identification, tree measurement, compassing, and forestry site evaluation; a banquet was scheduled to follow the rigorous competition that evening; and

WHEREAS, first on the agenda for the evening's gathering was the announcement of the overall individuals; Morgin Arms took fourth place, while Evan Betterton took first place; and

WHEREAS, then, team results were announced: Catherine Carney, Christen Carney, Katie Morgan, and Morgin Arms together earned fourth place and for the first time ever, a Putnam County 4-H forestry judging team won the State Championship: Mara McDonald, Mitch Baker, Evan Betterton, and Ashley McGray took top honors that evening and earned a chance to travel to West Virginia in July for the national competition; and

WHEREAS, in keeping with the motto of 4-H, "To make the best better," all of these young men and women have demonstrated the kind of keen intellectual ability, discipline, and love of the outdoors that will allow them to act as protectors of Tennessee's natural spaces and the life they harbor, guaranteeing that future generations will find the same beauty and wonder that characterizes Tennessee today; and

WHEREAS, these Putnam County 4-H teams truly epitomize the spirit and commitment that define the true Tennessean; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate the members of the Putnam County 4-H State Champion Forestry Judging Team and extend to all of them our best wishes for every future success.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.